

**A case of conscience
resolved: concerning
ministers meddling
with state-matt...**

Dury, John,

125 B 11 c Br. 1649



National Library
of Sweden

DURY, J.

Hist. Eng.
Polit.
(D. 2)

1649

A case of
CONSCIENCE
RESOLVED:

CONCERNING

Ministers meddling with State-matters in their
SERMONS:

AND

How far they are obliged by the Covenant
to interpose in the affairs of Civil Government.

By J. D. Minister of the Gospel. = John J. Dury.

March 15, *Imprimatur*, Joseph Caryl.



L O N D O N,

Printed by R. L. for R. W. at the Star under
S. Peters Church in Cernhill, 1649.

A case of
CONSCIENCE
RESOLVED:

CONCERNING
Ministers meddling with State-matters in their
SERMONS:

AND
How far they are obliged by the Covenant
to interfere in the affairs of Civil Government.

By A. D. Minister of the Gospel.

March 15. 1734. Printed by Joseph Caryl.



L O N D O N.
Printed by R. E. for A. W. at the Star under
St. Pauls Church in Cornhill, 1734.



A Case of
CONSCIENCE
resolv'd.

Concerning Ministers meddling with State-
matters in their Sermons, and how far they are obliged
by the Covenant to interpose in the affairs of Civil
Government.

S I R:



You have desired to know of me the reasons why I make it a scruple of conscience, to doe as others on all sides have done hitherto, *viz.* to intermeddle with matters of State in my Sermons: I shall briefly let you know the grounds of my scruple concerning this matter, and leaving them to your conscionable consideration, suggest some impartiall thoughts, which perhaps may ease you of the scruples which you have on the other hand, for which you thinke it either unlawfull for you, or unexpedient for your Flock, to leave intermeddling in those matters.

D *A case of Conscience resolv'd.*

Let us first agree what we mean by matters of State. As for my self, I conceive, State-matters to be all manner of Councils, Designes, Endeavours & Actings which are undertaken or prosecuted, by those that manage with Power or Authority, publike affairs; relating to the outward Possessions, Rights, Freedomes, Priviledges Prerogatives, and Persons of men, as they are Members of an outward Common-wealth or worldly Kingdom. Concerning which matters, I thinke it not at all lawfull for me to interpose my judgement in the pulpit, or to intermeddle towards the people, farther then the Apostle hath commanded, *Rom 13. ver. 1. till 8. & 1 Tim. 2.2. & Tit. 3. 1.* And the reasons why, I conceive, it not lawfull so to doe, are these.

1 First, I know no Law either of God or man obliging me to meddle with such matters, by interposing my judgement concerning them in the pulpit: and if no Law either expressly commanding, or by a good inference warranting this intermedling can be shewed; I understand not how it can be counted lawfull for any so to do.

2 Secondly, I finde a Law both of God and Man forbidding me to judge of matters which belong not unto me; or which particularly concern other men.

The Law of God is this: *Be not busie in other mens affairs, 1 Pet. 4. 15. And what have I to doe to judge them that are without? 1 Cor. 5. 12. And who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth, Rom. 14. 4. And judge not that he be not judged, Mat. 7. 1.* Now when I reflect upon my selfe in reference unto these Laws; my conscience doth tell me that I am not called to manage the affairs of State, but that they belong to other men, & therefore that I ought

not.

A case of Conscience resolv'd. 3

not to be busie in them, and trouble my head about them. And if I judge the Magistrates employment (as a Civill Magistrate) to be without the Church; I have scarce so much, sure I am no more right then the Apostle *Paul* had to judge of them: now he tels us, that he had nothing to doe to judge them, but that the judgement of those that are without the Church, God hath reserved unto himselfe, *1 Cor. 5. 13.* therefore it doth not appertain to me to meddle with them. But if as a Christian Magistrate, I take him to be within the Church, yet his employment, *quatenus* a Magistrate, is not mine, nor is he therein my servant, but Christs; and then the other rule doth take place, *Who art thou that judgest another mans servant?* now the Magistrate is undoubtedly Gods servant, *Rom. 13. 4.* therefore I must let him stand or fall to his own master, in matters of outward government, which God hath intrusted him and not me withall. And in case I do looke upon him as a Brother, and his actions or designs as the affairs of a private man, then still the former rules doe hold; and Christ doth forbid me to judge him in publike, or to lay his faults open to any till I have dealt with him in private, and by degrees brought him to the judicature of those who are his competent judges, *Mat. 18. 15. &c.* It is not lawfull therefore for me, in my private way to condemne him, whether I looke upon him as a brother, or not; and far lesse is it lawfull to judge him in publike, and make my selfe an Informer against him towards the multitude, who are not his competent judges.

Moreover, The Law of God in the fifth Commandement is, *Honour thy father and mother, that thy dayes may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee:*

A Case of Conscience resolv'd.

thee. All Divines have understood this as well of the respect due unto the Civill Magistrate as to naturall parents: now to take upon us to judge and censure their actions, or to blast and blame their proceedings in publicke before the multitude, directly or indirectly, is manifestly to dishonour them, and if this is unlawfull in a son to deale so with his parents, it is also unlawfull in a Subject to deale so with his Magistrates.

As for the laws of men in this matter I shal not need to mention any, for it is evident in all Nations, that to controule the actions of the Civil Magistrate, and to traduce him in his proceedings, is a Crime punishable in Subjects by those that have power and are in Authority over them; with death, imprisonment, fines or banishment, according to the nature of the fact, and as the Supreme Authority doth judge fit.

Thirdly, the Nature of the Gospel whereunto I am appointed a Minister by Christ, is inconsistent with the care of those things wherewith I must entermiddle, if I should take upon me to judg of them. For the Gospel is the Testimony of Jesus, to reveal him to the World, and to invite all men from the cares & lusts of the world, to enter into his Kingdom and rest, which is a Kingdom of Truth, & not of this World, whereof the Kingdoms are but lyes & restless vanities: if then I account my self appointed to this employment by Christ, to minde the Mysteries of his Truth; and that wisdom which is of God, which none of the Princes of this World know, or as Princes of this World care for. I ought not to apply my self to intermeddle in their affairs; and if I ought not to do this, I conceive, it is not lawful for me to judg of their affairs in publick, either to commend or condemne them

John 18 36,37.

[E] Cor. 2 7,8.

A case of Conscience resolv'd.

5

in the Pulpit. For Christ being intreated to employ his Authority, to cause one Brother to divide the inheritance with the other: did refuse to do it, upon this ground, because God had not appointed him a Judge, or a divider over men in temporall matters: the Disciple is not above the Master, and if the Master had no right to meddle in small matters between man & man, what right have I to meddle in the greatest between State and State, or Rulers and Subjects? when Christ called one of his Disciples to follow him, and he desired leave, *first, to go and bury his Father*; Christ bid him, *let the dead bury their dead, but go thou* (saith he) *and Preach the Kingdom of God.* If then those that are called to preach the Kingdom of God ought to free their mindes from the cares, which through natural affection, and a kind of Civil Duty so neerly concerne themselves and their kindred; how much more, ought they to be dis-interested in matters of State, which at all do not concerne them?

Luke 12. 53, 54

Matth. 8. 21, 22
Luke 9. 60.

The cares of a quite contrary nature cannot be at once rightly entertained in the same minde, they are like two opposite masters whom none can serve at the same time acceptably, nor at different times faithfully; therefore he that will be Christs servant and a faithfull souldier in his warfare; must not be intangled in the affairs of this life; otherwise he will not be able to please him, who hath chosen him to be a souldier, *2 Tim. 2. 4.* Now all the affairs of State concerne only this life and nothing else directly and principally.

Fourthly, The intermedling with State-matters in Sermons is contrary to the Rule of preaching; and to the true aime which ought to be maintained in the performance of that Duty.

The

6 A case of Conscience resolv'd.

The Rule of preaching is, *if any man speake let him speake as the Oracles of God.* 1. Pet. 4. 11. We are warranted to speake nothing, (if we speake in Gods name,) but that which is undeniably his Word: nothing can beget faith and build up the soule unto godlinesse, but the truth of God; if we speake other matters which the wisdom of earthly men or our own imaginations or passions dictate, we profane the Ordinance of God, and destroy the faith of the hearers. What is the chaffe to the wheat? saith, the Lord, by the Prophet *Jeremiah*. Our own words and dreames about temporall concernments are lesse worth then chaffe, and the faith of professors cannot stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. And because Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God, therefore in our preaching, we should *determine to know nothing amongst our hearers, but Jesus Christ and him Crucified.*

Jer. 23. 28.

1 Cor. 2. 5.

1 Cor. 2. 2.

The aime to be maintained in preaching is to perswade God only and not men; and not to please men or become their servants, but Gods alone, *Gal. 1. 10.* for *he that intendeth to please men is no more the servant of Christ.* Now when men set themselves to speake of State-matters in the Pulpit, their aime is either to please the Magistrates by commending them to the people, or to shew their dislike against their proceedings by reproving the same which doth tend to make the people displeas'd with their Magistrates: now whether the designe be the one, or the other, it is altogether unworthy of the Minister of the Gospell; and a man cannot possibly mention the affaires of State in publike, but it must be either way, and therefore he ought neither way to do it.

And whatsoever a mans aime may be in meddling thus
with

A case of Conscience resolv'd. 78

with State-matters, as he doth no service to God in it for he perverts the mindes of the hearers, from the integrity and simplicity of the Gospell to reflect upon and affect (with reference to worldly wisdom,) the waies of a-party: for all State-matters are continually carryed by some plots in the hands of one party or other, and whosoever doth meddle with them, either to commend or discommend the proceedings, must be the servant of a party, and so forsakes the spirituall liberty and impartiality wherein he ought to stand, and whereunto he ought to bring the mindes of his hearers, that they may be willing to serve all men in love, for their spirituall edification, without prejudice for Christs sake. The interest of States-men and matters, change according to circumstances by which those that manage publike affairs finde their advantages, if the Minister of the Gospell will oblige himselfe to meddle with these matters, he will be constrained either to say and un-say the same things, if he follow State principles (which is to discredit the truth of the Gospell, for when men are sway'd with carnall considerations, they must needs make the same thing in their preaching, yea, yea, and nay, nay, (as we have found many doe of late) or if he will be inflexible and not change his note with the times, he will be engaged into occasions of strife and controversies with others for worldly matters as oft as they change, which how inconvenient it is for a Minister of the Gospell to doe, and how prejudiciall it is unto his profession, I leave you to judge.

The scandals which are given against the Gospell to those that are discerning, and perceive mens faults in preaching for Interests, are very hainous and hurtfull to

8 *A case of Conscience resolv'd.*

the truth, and to the ministry thereof to discredit it: for by this means naturall men become Atheists, for thereupon they count all Religion nothing else but a cloke of hypocrisie: these practises stagger the weak also who are led with blind zeal to be engaged into factions against their brethren, and to maintain divisious, which overthrow the Churches peace and unity, and thereby subtrill Statesmen take advantages to lay snares before unwary Ministers who have more zeale then prudence, to entrap them and make use of them for their own ends, and then when they have made them their hackneys, and serv'd their turns out of them, they turn them away with neglect and contempt at the journeys end, because they deserve no better.

Now I knowing these things to be the naturall consequents of Ministers intermedling with State-matters, cannot thinke it lawfull for me to come within the reach of these snares, and therefore must avoid the occasions thereof, and am willing to warne you of the same, whereof we see many examples before our eyes.

These are the chiefe heads of Reasons which have made me abstain from that way of preaching which some have followed, and, as I conceive, these grounds which justify my way to be un-answerable, so I never could finde any solidity in those pretences which are alledged for the contrary practise.

For that which is pretended from *Ezech. 3. 17 till 22. & 33. ver. 7.* That Ministers are made Watchmen, to give warning to the wicked, to warne them from their wicked way, and to the righteous also, that they turn not from their righteousnesse, is not otherwise to be understood but in cleer cases, wherein Gods Commandment is manifestly transgressed, and to be directed immediately

A case of Conscience resolv'd. 9

mediately towards the persons themselves, who are transgressors, to make them sensible of the guilt & danger under which they stand. But in doubtful cases, wherein there is no cleere word from Gods mouth, wherein the Magistrates actions may be mis-interpreted, wherein hee pretends to walke by a just Rule; wherein his secret aime and intention, by a jealousie of State, is rather condemn'd then his fact, and wherein he is not expressly dealt withall himselfe to convict his conscience concerning the iniquity of his proceedings to rectifie it; but is cryed out upon before others, and censured before the multitude, who are not his competent judges, (which is the practise of those that in the pulpits have medled & do meddle with State matters) I say in such cases, and in such a way of proceeding, no colour can be taken from the watch-office of *Ezechie*l to warrant it: for look upon the charge which he doth receive, & the way how he is to discharge it, and you will see that your practise is nothing like it. The charge is, That the *Watchman* should heare the word at Gods mouth, and give the house of Israel warning from God, ver. 17. This imports an expresse Commandement, and a cleere transgression of the Commandement in those that are to be warned, and a peculiar mission from God to give the warning: The way how this warning is to be given to the wicked and to the righteous, is by a particular address, which the Watchman was to make as from God unto themselves immediately. If the Ministers that meddle with State-matters will observe these rules, far be it from me to condemn them; but if their arguing against the proceedings of those that are in places of Authority, hath nothing in it approaching unto this way,

10 *A case of Conscience resolv'd.*

then I must be dispenced from following it, and I think it my duty to discover the irregularity of it, by testifying against it. If men will make themselves through State jealousies and evill surmises against those that manage publike affairs, watchmen over their Rulers; when they are divided among themselves for State interests; for the advantage of one party to blast and discredit another; and then pretend that they discharge the Watch Office which is committed unto them, I shall leave them to answer it to the chief shepherd of the flock, for it becometh not me to judge another mans servants, farther then by putting them in minde of the commands of their Master, which are undeniable by his know will.

But from the contemplation of the Ministers Office over the souls of the people, and their obligation to give an account thereof unto God: there is an objection and doubt which may be raised, thus: But what if I see my flock like to be led away (by the example of those that are in authority, or the instigation of those that have power) unto wicked and unjust courses, which are destructive to the true Religion and the safety of the State; shall I not warne them of the danger in this case? I answer, yes, you are bound to fore-warn them of the danger which you thinke they are like to fall into; if the thing be evident and cleerly a transgression of Gods will; I say you are bound to fore-warn as wel those that by their authority and power led others out of the way, as those that are led by them; thus in cases of Idolatry and Oppression, the Prophets did addressse themselves directly to the Rulers of the people; they shewed them the undoubted Commandement of God, and their undeniable practice opposite unto it, and in a case which evidently

A case of Conscience resolv'd. II

idently doth pervert the truth of Religion, and endanger the safety of the State; the fact it selfe, and the unrighteousnesse thereof is to be laid open before all, from the Word of God, and all are to be warned of the dangerous consequences thereof, which may be done in *Thesis*; leaving the *Hypothesis* and particular application to every mans judgement, to discharge his conscience towards God therein; but now we have seen men that accuse those whom they would discredit before the multitude, not to meddle with the matter in *Thesis*, but with the *Hypothesis* of their own coyning, upon conjecturall appearances, charging faults suspiciously, and by way of insinuation, whereupon a strict examination none were to be found. He that insists upon the *Hypothesis* of a matter, to charge some body with the guilt thereof, doth evidently shew that his aim is not so much to rectifie the fault as to make him odious, whom he chargeth with it; but he that handleth the *Thesis* of a matter, doth not to instruct and warn all men of their duty, that they may looke to their wayes. The Court Chaplains did flatter, Court the King, and the Bishops in their Sermons heretofore, with reproaches and aspersions which they did cast upon the Puritans, to make them odious, rather that they might be persecuted then reformed, and since these Troubles it cannot be denyed, but the popular Preachers have paid them home in their own way, by courting the humours of the multitude to incense them against the King and his Prelates, that they also might be also persecuted then reformed: All which on both sides hath wrought nothing else but animosities and confusions, which have brought these distresses upon the Nation, and mainly obstructed the wayes of true re-

bib
for-

formation. But if the Watchmen on both sides had handled matters in *Thesi*, and dealt with those who were to be warned, to draw them from the error of their way, by the means of Gods Counsell rather then for humane Designes, we might have been preserved from the dangers into which they have helped to bring us.

There is another pretence taken to colour this practise from the commandements which the Apostle doth give to *Timothy* and *Titus*, *Them that sin rebuke before all*, 1 Tim. 5. 20. *be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, &c.* 2 Tim. 4. 2. and *rebuke them sharply, &c.* Titus 1. 13. and such like.

But, I conceive, that all these directions are given to Pastors, only in reference to those that are immediatly under their Pastorall Charge in cleer Cases, wherein they are to deal with the parties themselves immediatly: it is therefore a great mistake to apply them unto other persons who are not under their Pastorall charge, and in cases which are mysteries of State, and not obvious to the cognizance of every one, and which are handled; not before the parties themselves, but before others who are not capable to judge thereof, as the common multitude is. If we looke to that which Christ did in this way of reproof towards the Scribes and Pharisees, *Mat. 23.* we shall see how these reproofs ought to be managed. First, it may be observed that Christ came not to this sharpness with them till towards the latter end of his Ministry, after that he had in all probability dealt oftentimes with them in a milder way, to make them sensible of their duty: For it is said of him, that he did not breake the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax, that he did

did not strive, nor caused his voyce to be heard in the streets, *Mat. 12. 19, 20.* whence we must conclude, that he never at first dealt with any man sharply, but gently alwayes, but when he found these Scribes and Pharisees incorrigible, then lest the people might be seduced by their practises, he doth give them a necessary warning to preserve them from being perverted by the example of their leaders, and reproves the open faults of their leaders, in cleer cases convincingly before them. Secondly, he doth it in such a way which is without all exception. For he doth not intend to discredit them in their places, or blast their authority towards the people, but establisheth it, commanding the people to harken to them as they sit in *Moses seat, ver. 2, 3.* then he reproves them not behind their back to the people, but to their faces in the presence of the people. And lastly, he insists upon perticular matters of fact, which were undeniable, wherein he not only discovers their Hypocrisie, to convince them of it, but shews them the Duty which ought to be done; and warns them of the judgment which is to come upon them if they neglect it. Now if the Ministers that meddle with State-affairs in the pulpit would observe this way and method; their practise would be free from all exceptions: for if they can deal with those that manage publike Affairs, to rectifie that which they finde opposite to Christianity, and amiss in them, first, by way of counsel in private; and if afterward finding that private admonitions profit not, but that they persevere in a course of State-hypocrisie, to endanger the salvation of others, whom they may seduce by their example from the sincerity of the holy profession: if (I say) in such a case without prejudice.

14 *A case of Conscience resolv'd.*

dice to their just authority, they can deale roundly and openly with them, to convince of the perversness of their way, and to reclaim them from the errours thereof, this would not only be warrantable, but commendable: but how far this is intended by any, I leave to you to judg, and to the conscience of those that handle State-matters in their Sermons to determine between God and themselves.

As for that which some say, that men must not be luke-warm Neutralists, but zealous in the Cause of God and for the publike good. I answer it is so; but we must also take heed, that we mistake not the Cause of God, and that we make not our own partial aimes and private Interests, that which we call God's Cause: let God's Cause be stated as it relates to the Gospel of Christ, let it be handled in *Thesi & Antithesi*, as it reflects upon the conscience of all men by the manifestation of the Truth; and let no personall reproaches, insinuations, reflexions, and particular worldly matters, to asperse any body, be mixed with it, and let it be held forth with all spirituall fervency from the Word, and so let it be recommended to Gods blessing upon the hearts of the hearers: but let us not call our own contrivements Gods Cause, nor humane passions raised upon jealousies or discontents, zeal. Do we not see evidently that no party doth count any thing a publike good, but that which is for its own way? and that all its zeal and strength is spent, not so much to build up, to settle or advance any righteous constitution in common? as to set up it self over the adverse party, and to cast down every thing which is not for its own Interest? this is evidently all the zeal of these times, *viz.* to strive for power over others; and then to act by

meer

A case of Conscience resolv'd. 15

meer will according to power, against all that are found or suspected to be opposites. And if not to be active in this way of partiality, or putt up for the Interest of one against another, to have the rule, be counted to be a luke-warme Neutralist, I shall confesse my selfe to be one of these, and yet I hope I shall never be found a Neutralist before God in his Cause, nor luke-warm towards the way of truth and peace, which is without Partiality and without Hypocrisie.

But above all this, there is yet one Scruple more which doth stick with you, which is, the tenour of the Nationall Covenant, whereby you conceive you are solemnly obliged before God to advance the publike wayes of Reformation mentioned therein, as well towards the Church as towards the State: Now you say (and say well) that in case the tenour of it be made void to bring a guilt upon the Nation, that you are bound in conscience to free your selfe from that guilt, and as a Minister of God to warne others of that danger, and consequently to meddle with State-matters so far as this comes to.

To this I say, that if you doe this as a Minister of the Gospel ought to do, and not as a Minister of State-Affairs, you doe that which is your duty. It is far from me to desire you or any man to be slack in observing your Vows, and performing your Oath unto God; I shall rather, as bound in the same promise, strengthen your heart and hands in it: and to that effect I shall tell you how I finde my selfe engaged in the Covenant. I tooke the Covenant as obliging my selfe unto God to perform the tenour thereof, and not unto men. I took it to prosecute the lawfull wayes of advancing Religion
C and

16 *A case of Conscience resolv'd.*

and Righteousnesse, and Reformation and Peace, in Church and Commonwealth, and not to become servicable to any one party against another. And lastly, I took it to advance these aimes in this place, with a speciall reference and subordination to the main rules, and fundamental aimes of my profession in Christianity, and not otherwayes, and least those who desired me to joyn with them in prosecuting the tenour of the Covenant, might seem to impose their sense upon me in taking it, or might in time to come pretend to have me obliged, as it were by implicite faith, to follow their courses in observing it: I sent unto them before I tooke it, my sense of the Articles thereof in writing, containing a Declaration of the way which I thought my selfe bound to follow in keeping the same: which you shall see when ever you please, and according to this engagement, although all men should neglect and disanull the Covenant, yet by me it never shall be forsaken by Gods grace, but maintained and followed so long as I shall have abilities so to doe.

If then I should answer your scruple concerning your engagement, upon this account of meddling with State-matters in case the Covenant should be made void, I must refer you to the words of the Covenant it selfe, to let you see how far it doth oblige you to follow this way. The first, third, fifth, and sixth Articles doe limit your endeavours to your *power, place, calling, vocation, and interest*, if I conceive then my proper place, calling, vocation and interest to be in the pulpit, none other but to speake the Oracles of God, and to meddle with nothing else directly but with the knowledge of Jesus Christ & him crucified, as in the Covenant of Grace he is offered

unto

A case of Conscience resolv'd. 17

unto us, by Repentance and Faith in his Name: and to mention nothing indirectly, but what is evidently opposite unto the tenour of some profitable truth belonging unto that matter: if (I say) this is so, then I may soon determine the bounds of my intermedling, how far they should reach, and where to stop, for I am bound up by mine own promise, not to meddle further then a servant of Christ in the Gospel ought to doe: so that I should make my selfe a transgressor of the Covenant if I should interpose my judgement in the pulpit further then either makes to lead my hearers unto Christ, and to the observation of the Covenant of grace, which the Father doth make with us in him, or otherwise then is suitable to the Rules of edification towards all, without offence and partiality towards any. If then I should step beyond this line, and take upon me, through some insight in State Designes, to play the Statist toward the people, to sway their inclinations to some earthly byas, for certain ends which Christ hath not bid me prosecute in his husbandry; I know not how I should be able to answer it unto mine own conscience in his presence: for my spirit would tel me, that to play the huckster with the truth, to corrupt the Word of God, and not to handle it in sincerity, and as of God, is not the part of a faithfull servant of Christ: therefore as I would not have any to judge of me, I shall never take upon me to judge of any mans secret intentions in handling the Word, and mixing heterogeneall matters of publike concernment with his Sermon: Every one shall answer to his own Master that which he hath done, be it good or evil, and the day which burneth as fire, and is neer at hand, shall try his work whether it be of combustible matter or not; I have

enough to doe to looke to mine own feet, to walke in an even path: and I desire that all my brethren who are engaged in the Covenant, may be carefull to examine their own hearts and wayes according to the rules heretofore mentioned; and if they consider conscionably the property of their calling and place, & finde that to discharge their duty in it, they must tell States-men their duty in private or in publike, as well as others, and that with some reference to publike matters of State, let them do it in Gods name freely, but let the manner of doing it be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ, and the Stewards of the Mysteries of God; that is, let all be done in love, let nothing be offered without a cleere discovery of Gods will from the Word; and when worldly circumstances and matters of fact are mentioned, let no passion, no envie, no vain-glory appear, nor any thing be done with a murmuring and disputing affection, but let the spirit of meeknesse and compassion govern the whole carriage of the businesse, towards the restoring of those that are overtaken in a fault rather then to shame them, or give others any occasion to insult over them. With these cautions, if the Covenant doth bring any speciall engagement upon any mans conscience, to take notice of State-matters further then otherwise is incident to the Ministeriall function in an ordinary way: I suppose he may walke safely towards God and without offence towards men in matters of greatest scrupulosity.

But for a further clearing of Scruples which may be incident in this kinde, I shall put a Case, which in evill times before the witnesss be killed; faithfull Ministers in their Warfare against the Beast, may and will be put unto. Let us then suppose, that it shall be made a crime worthy

worthy of death, to speake against any humane constitutions, which Authority shall set up in Gods worship, although never so contrary to the expresse Word of God, as in the Bishops times some were made offenders for a word, and a pretence taken from any small thing which seemed to contradict Authority, was enough to out a man from his place whom they called a popular Preacher; not so much because the thing deserv'd outing; but because any occasion would serve to silence a powerful and faithful Minister. In such a case the question is, how far a conscionable Minister is bound to appear in opposition to the Sanctions of Authority?

To this I shall answer, First, That in such a case where Gods Word is cleerly opposite to the sanction of man in matters of his own worship, no man may with a good conscience be indifferent, connive, or seem to give way unto the establishment thereof willingly, for this would be a luke-warmnesse in Gods service.

Secondly, no man can give an exact rule to another, what in such occasions, as may fall out in reference to his Flock, or against his adversaries he should doe, to quit himselfe, and not betray the Truth, or the souls of his Flock unto the power of seduction, because circumstances are infinite, therefore men are to study generall Rules; and must in particulars be left unto the directions of Gods Spirit, who doth oft times call forth his servants to the battell upon smaller occasions, to fight as effectually as upon greater ones, and in some men, the humane imprudencies of their spirituall zeal, may be as usefull in Gods way of ordering the same, as the greatest prudence of others.

Thirdly, although a faithful Minister may neither con-

nive

nive nor shew any compliance with that which hee knows to be cleerly opposite to the wil of God, but must be zealously affected and bent to stand out against it, in the sphere of his calling; yet he is not obliged either at all times to set himself openly against it; or to appear in such a way of contradiction unto it, which may give the adversaries of the Gospel some advantages, which they lie in wait to take against him, from the manner of his opposition or contradiction: therefore it is lawfull at all times, and in such cases very expedient to use Prudency, and by some spirituall Stratagems to defeat the enemies of their advantages; which may be done sometimes by declining a direct and open contradiction of that which is the act of Authority; and by using another way of opposing the same, which may be as effectually and yet not lyable to any exception. For there are two ways of handling all matters of Doctrine and Practise, the one is Positive the other Negative; the Negative is to refute and contradict that which another doth assert or practise, condemning it as an error, or a fault. The Positive is to confirme and declare our own opinion as a Truth, and if this be done effectually in a matter wherein our assertion doth by a cleer consequence make void the error, or overthrow the practice of our adversary; it is no less profitable to beare witness to the Truth, then a direct reproving of vice by an expresse condemnation thereof: by this Method then, a faithful Minister may prudently decline a snare laid to entrap him if he should presume to be so stout, as to contradict that which is expressly established; and yet may zealously and effectually discharge his Conscience, and preserve his flock from error by a Positive delivery of
the

the Truth; which being entertain'd from Gods Word, will be liable to no exception; and yet destroy the error and discover the fault of those that abuse their Authority in all mens minds, although the consequence be not expressly made, or the thing to be condemn'd once nam'd.

Thus then in matters of State, which Authority may perhaps set a foot directly, in opposition to the Kingdom of Christ, to make men guilty that shal openly contradict it, zealous men may decline an open Contradiction, and by asserting strongly that matter of Religion or Worship, which is opposite in its nature to that matter of State, which authority would settle, quit their conscience fully; and without naming the thing, which may not be professedly condemn'd, yet overthrow it in all mens minds, he that did assert strongly from the Word of GOD, that the LORDS Day is to be kept holy to GOD in spirituall duties, to enter into his rest, and minde him alone without any other thoughts, and that all professors are bound in conscience to intend this, as they desire to partake of his holinesse, and that the neglect of this duty is a forfeiture of that holinesse which God in his Covenant by the ordinance of that day doth offer to us, he (I say) that did strongly make out this to be a truth which cannot be controuled, did fully condemn and refute the Book of Sports on the Lords day, which was set up by Authority, although he never did once name it; and so in all other Cases, something may be done of like nature, when adversaries lie in wait to finde occasions of making men offenders if they dare seem to be directly opposites to that which beares the name of Authority. Also the *Thesis* of a matter may be so fully handled

handled, that the *Hypothesis* need not to be once named, but all men will be able to make the application thereof by themselves. The defensive postures in Fencing are easier and safer then the offensive, and he that is so well skil'd therein, that his adversaries by assaulting him, gains nothing else but wearinesse to himselfe, and the spending of his strength in vain, will in the end have an easie conquest of him. And to cure diseases there are two ways, either by the strengthening of the vitall spirits in the naturall constitution of every one, or by the purging out of evill humours: if nature can be so well fortified by Cordials or Fomentations, as to cast out that which is noxious by it self, it is far better and safer then to use Purgations which alwayes bring some trouble, and weaken the spirits for a time. Thus it is also with the best of reproofs and censures upon the mindes of naturall men. *Verbum sapienti satis est.* The Lord direct us wisely to walke in the light, and by the power of it to dispel the power of darknesse, that we may shine without blame in the midst of a crooked and perverte generation: Let us pray for the spirit of promise, which wil direct us in all Truth, and the God of Truth and Peace be with you: In him I shall rest,

Your assured friend in Christ,

J. D.



The Vow which *J. D.* hath made, and
the Covenant which he doth enter into with God, in
reference to the Nationall Covenant of the
Kingdoms. Sent to London from the
Hague, the ¹¹ of Decemb. 1643.

THete of my conscience to the profession of
the Gospel, whereby I am made a Subject of
Jesus Christ the King of Kings, partaker of
the priviledges of the Kingdom of heaven,
and a free Citizen of the spirituall *Jerusalem*, doth binde
me to bear witness unto the Truth, to joyn my self unto
the professours thereof, and to subscribe my name unto
the Lord, to serve under his Banner, for the preservation
and enlargement of his Church till he receive all the
Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of
the earth for his possession. Therefore, according to the
nature of the Ministeriall function wherein God hath set
me, and the Vows which I have formerly made to express
my faithfulness towards him, and my blamelesse dealing
free from partiality towards all men, and chiefly to-
wards those of the household of faith: I conceive my self
obliged to answer the call which is given me, whereby I
am requiried to contribute help towards the publike edi-
fication of the Church whereof I am a Member.

I declare then in the presence of Almighty God, who
shall judge the quick and the dead at the day of his glo-
rious appearing, that I have no ends in this undertaking
but these.

First, to satisfie my conscience in the duties which I

D

owe

owe to Christ in his Kingdom amongst all, and chiefly Evangelicall Christians, and more particularly amongst those of my Nationall Church.

Secondly, to shew my fidelity unto my Lawfull Sovereign, to the Kingdomes, and to the peace of both in the profession of the Gospel. And

Thirdly, to endeavour the edification of all my Evangelicall Brethren at home and abroad, who are distressed for want of mutuall love and peaceable affections, and distracted by reason of uncharitable jealousies, passionate injuries, and injurious mistakes. Therefore my aime in this enterprize, is and shall be without all mixture of humane respects, to procure so far as God shall enable me in the way of my spirituall calling, a remedy to these evils, and to this effect having renewed my Covenant, with Almighty God, and the Vows by which I am solemnly obliged to the Rules of my profession, I have answerably to the same lifted up my hand to heaven, and sworn to the most high God, as followeth.

I *That in the Ministry of the New Covenant of everlasting Life & Peace, which God hath graciously erected with mankind in Jesus Christ, and according to the analogie of Christian Faith cleerly taught; and the rules of Christian duties expressly commanded in holy Scripture; and by the undoubted principles of sincere dealing, manifestly revealed in the conscience of every one, and usefull for edification, and avoiding of offence in the communion of Saints: I shall sincerely, really and constantly, through the grace of God, endeavour to preserve every where, but more especially in the Church of Scotland, and to advance towards perfection in the Church of England, and Ireland, the Reformed Religion, in the free and publike profession and practise of the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government thereof, according to the Word*
of

of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches, and shall by the means aforesaid, furthermore endeavour as I shall finde opportunity, to bring the Churches of God in the three Kingdoms to the neereſt Conjunction and Uniformity that may be Evangelically obtained in Religion, confeſſion of Faith, forme of Church Government, Directory for Worſhip and Catechizings, that they and their poſterity may as brethren live in unity of the ſpirit through the bond of peace, in faith and love amongſt themſelves, and correſpond amiably with forreign Proteſtants, that the God of Peace, Love and Unity, may delight to dwell in the miſt of them.

That by the means aforesaid, I ſhall in like manner without worldly reſpects and reſpecting of perſons, endeavour the rooting out of all plants which the heavenly Father hath not planted, and more particularly that I ſhall labour to extirpate all humane uſurped power over the Church of God & the conſciences of men, tending to lead them in a Lordly tyrannicall way to depend upon the will of man, by a blinde credulity and forced obedience in matters of Faith and Religious praëtiſe, whether it be called now Popery or Prelacie, by the Titles of Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops, their Courts, Chancellours, Commiſſaries, Deans and Chapters, Arch-Deacons, and ſuch like Eccleſiaſticall Officers, depending upon that Hierarchy, or by what name ſoever it may or ſhall be called hereafter. And that, in like manner, I ſhall labour to extirpate all Superſtition and all Hereſies condemned by the Primitive Generall Councels of the true ancient Church, all Schiſme, chiefly amongſt Evangelicall Proteſtants who have caſt off the Papall Yoke, all prophaneneſſe, and what ſoever ſhall be found contrary to ſound Doctrinè, and the power of godlineſſe, leſt I partake of other mens ſins, and be in danger to receive of their plagues, that the Lord may be one, and his name one, not only in the three Kingdoms, but in all the Kingdoms of the earth.

3 That I shall by the means aforesaid, in the same sincerity, reality, and constancie, according to my calling, endeavour with my estate and life to preserve the rights and priviledges of the Parliaments and the Liberties of the Kingdomes which are fundamentall and necessary for the conservation of the publike State, and that I shall also preserve and defend with my estate and life, the Kings Majesties person & Authority to which I am bound by the Oath of Allegiance, as to the head of the publike State in the preservation and defence of the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdomes, that the World may beare witnessse with my conscience of my loyalty, and that I have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesties just power and greatnesse.

4 That I shall with all faithfulness endeavour the discovery of all such as have been or shall be Incendiaries, Malignants, or evill Instruments, by hindering the Reformation of Religion, dividing the King from his people, or one of the Kingdoms from another, or making any Factions or Parties among the people, contrary to the tenour of the Nationall League or Covenant, that they may be drawn from the error of their wayes and brought to repentance, or otherwise to publike tryall, and receive condigne punishment, as the degree of their offence shall require or deserve, or the suprem Judicatories of both Kingdoms respectively, or others having power from them to that effect shall judge convenient.

5 And where as the happinesse of a blessed Peace and Union betwecn the Kingdoms, denied in former times to our progenitors, is by the good providence of God granted to us, and hath been lately concluded and settled by both Parliaments, I shall according to my place and interest endeavour that the Kingdoms may remain conjoyn'd in a firm Peace and Union to all posterity, and that justice may be done upon the wilfull opposers thereof, in manncr expressed in the precedent Articles.

I shall also according to my place and calling, in the common cause of Religion, Liberty, and Peace of the Kingdoms, assist & defend all those that enter into the National League and Covenant in the maintaining and pursuing thereof, & shall not suffer my selfe directly or indirectly by whatsoever combination, perswasion, or terrour, to be withdrawn and divided from this blessed Union and Conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or to give my selfe to a detestable indifferencie or neutrality in this Cause which so much concerns the glory of God, the good of the Kingdoms, the honour of the King, and the welfare of all Evangelical Churches, which I shall labour to bring to a good correspondencie and brotherly affection with the Churches of the Kingdoms, and one with another, and so all the dayes of my life, shall zealously and constantly continue against all opposition in this endeavour of publike edification, peace and reconcilement of Protestants, not leaving off to promote more particularly the Nationall Cause according to my power, against all Lets and Impediments whatsoever, and what I am not able to suppress or overcome by my selfe I shall reveal & make known that it may be timely prevented or removed. All which I shall doe as in the sight of God.

And least in the use of the foresaid means for the prosecuting of these endeavours, as well towards those of my Nation, as towards other Evangelicall Churches, I might either unadvisedly give, or others might colourably take offences and scandals at me, from whence inconveniencies in this worke, as tares in a good field, may grow up, and choake the fruits thereof, for want of circumspection and care to determine the way and manner of proceeding, by necessary Rules tending to edification: therefore I shall faithfully endeavour to shape my course in all things conformable to the life of Jesus Christ the Captain of this Warfare, whose foot steps

I am bound to follow, and whose life is the Rule of Righteousnesse, and to speake more particularly of this, I shall order the wayes of my proceedings by these Rules.

1 I shal walk in the Light, doing all things openly; and being desirous to come to the Light, and approve my ways to the conscience of every one, I shal reject all hidden things of darknes, and the tricks of worldly wisdom.

2 I shal not meddle out of my Spirituall Calling with matters of State, nor suffer my Ministeriall gifts to serve Politicians for worldly ends.

3 My way shall be wholly Evangelical, that is to say, fitted to prepare the minds of men to entertain the glad tydings of the Gospel of Peace. And to this effect;

I shal seek out and propose the Counsels and means of Peace by the Truth, bearing witness thereunto, as it shal be reveal'd to me, and exhorting and perswading indifferently all to receive it.

I shal not strive, nor cry, nor lift up my voice in the streets, that is to say, I shal not entertain the contentious custom of bitter railings, and confused disputings, by odious censuring and condemning of others, to lay open their faults; but rather study by loving admonitions to redress them.

I shal not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, that is to say, I shal beare with the weak and support the feeble, not pleasing my self, but condescending to things of low degree, besitting the capacity of the simple and ignorant, I wil labour to heal the breaches of their Spirit, and carry their burthens till God send forth judgment unto victory.

If I be wronged, I shall not intend revenge or requite evill for evill, or give way to evil surmizes, or make sinner

nister

nister reports of my evill willers known, but rather shall cover their faults, so far as may be without detriment to the publike cause, and the necessary cleering of mine own innocencie.

In a word, I shall doe nothing to another, which I would not have done in the like case unto my selfe, and what I would have done by others to my selfe, I shall first do it unto them.

Lastly, I shall alwayes be ready to goe without the Camp, to bear the reproach, and partake of the Crosse of Jesus Christ.

And because not only the Kingdoms but all Protestant Churches and Evangelical States, and every one that liveth therein, are guilty of many sins and provocations against God and his Son Jesus Christ, as is too manifest by the present distresses and dangers, the fruits thereof befalling to all, as well at home as abroad; Therefore I propose and declare before God my unfeigned desire to be humbled for my own sins, and for the sins of my Brethren in the Kingdoms, and in the Churches at home & abroad, especially that we have not all valued as we ought the inestimable benefit of the Gospel, that wee have not laboured for the purity and power thereof, and that we have not endeavoured to receive Christ in our hearts, nor to walke worthy of him in our lives, which are the causes of other sins and transgressions so much abounding amongst all. And my true and unfeigned purpose, desire and endeavour is for my selfe, and for all others under my power and charge both in publike and in private, in all duties I owe to God and man, to amend my life and theirs, and to goe before others in the example of a reall Reformation, that the Lord may turn away his wrath and heave indignation from all his people, and
establi sh

30 *30* *The unpartial ^{sense} censure, &c.*

establish the Churches and the Kingdoms in Truth and Peace.

And this Covenant and Vow I make in the presence of Almighty God, the searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same unblameably, as I shall answer at the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. Most humbly beseeching the Lord to strengthen me and all those that enter into the like resolution by his holy Spirit for this end, and to blesse all our desires and proceedings of this kinde, with such successe as may be deliverance and safety to his people, and encouragement to other Christian Churches, groaning under, or in danger of the Yoke of Antichristian Tyranny, to joyne in the same or like Association and Covenant, to the glory of God, the enlargement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the peace and tranquillity of all Christian Kingdoms and Commonwealths. Amen.

I have said and subscribe my selfe, J. D.

F I N I S.